

NextUp Eligibility Expansion (SB 512)

Community College Student Basic Needs

Effective January 1, 2022, Senate Bill 512 makes changes to the Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support (CAFYES) program, also known as NextUp, to address barriers posed by current program rules.

WHAT IS NEXT UP?

Children and youth typically enter foster care due to serious abuse and neglect. This trauma is often compounded by the instability youth experience while in foster care, through placement and school changes. Together, these lead to poor educational outcomes, most notably low rates of college completion. Just ten percent of foster youth obtain a degree by age 23—as compared to 35 percent of the same-age non-foster youth population.

In 2014, this serious educational disparity led the California State Legislature to pass SB 1023 (Liu), which established a special program for foster youth enrolled in community college, known as the Cooperating Agencies Foster Youth Educational Support (CAFYES) program, later rebranded as NextUp. This program is in place at 46 community colleges, serving 2,100 current and former foster youth annually.

NextUp provides a comprehensive array of services to promote college retention and degree attainment. Prior to the enactment of SB 512, eligibility requirements included:

- in foster care after the age of 16
- under age 26
- enrolled in a minimum of nine units

For more information, visit the [NextUp](#) website.

HOW HAS ELIGIBILITY CHANGED?

SB 512 modified eligibility so that students who were in foster care at any point after age 13 may participate in NextUp. This definition is aligned with the definition used to establish independent status on the Free Application for Federal Student Aid (FAFSA) and California Dream Act Application.

In addition, the bill created flexibility around income requirements. Programs may admit students on a case-by-case basis whose income exceeds the minimum threshold.

WHAT OTHER CHANGES DID SB 512 MAKE TO THE NEXT UP PROGRAM?

The bill made the following two additional changes:

- Specified that funds can be used to provide support to enrolled students as they are matriculating.
- Requires programs to create streamlined systems for application and entry

WHAT CHANGES IMPACT STUDENTS NOT ENROLLED IN NEXT UP?

The bill also modified the criteria for priority registration for foster youth across all three public post-secondary systems to align with that of NextUp. Students in foster care at any point after the age of 13 are now eligible for priority registration at community colleges and CSUs, and UCs are requested to provide this as well.